



Polling Memo on Marijuana Legalization

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EPIC-MRA Statewide Survey – 600 sample – 4% error rate Conducted by live callers from December 10-14, 2014 Includes 20% cell phones

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Commissioned by Michigan NORML, the Michigan Chapter of the
National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

Key findings

A 50% majority of Michigan voters would vote “yes” on a ballot proposal to legalize and tax marijuana, with 46% voting “no” and 4% undecided

This is up 3 points from a 47% plurality in September of 2013 who favored one of four proposals which was described to legalize and tax marijuana

Here is the question all survey respondents were asked in the December 2014 survey:

“On another topic, voters may circulate petitions to place a proposal on a future election ballot relating to the issue of marijuana. The proposal would make the possession and cultivation of limited amounts marijuana legal in the State of Michigan for adults age 21 or older. Also, it would allow the sale of marijuana to adults age 21 or older only by stores that would be licensed by the state, and finally, it would tax the sale of marijuana by these state licensed stores. If this proposal were to appear on a future election ballot, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve of the proposal, or would you vote no to oppose it?”

[IF VOTING YES/NO, ASK: “Would you definitely vote (YES/NO), or probably vote (YES/NO)?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE]

[IF UNDECIDED, ASK: “Well, if the election were held today and you had to decide right now, would you lean toward voting yes to approve of the proposed law or no to oppose it?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE]

39% Definitely vote yes
9% Probably vote yes
2% Lean toward voting yes
50% TOTAL VOTE YES
46% TOTAL VOTE NO
35% Definitely vote no
8% Probably vote no
3% Lean toward voting no
4% Undecided/Refused

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer

- Market
- Research
- Analysis

Clearly, a bare majority of Michigan voters would vote “yes” on a proposal to legalize the possession and cultivation of limited amounts of marijuana for adults age 21 or older.

In a survey conducted in September of 2013 for Michigan NORML, a 47 percent plurality said they favored a proposal to “legalize marijuana by taxing and regulating it like alcohol.”

Specifically, survey respondents in September of 2013 were asked the following question:

“The U.S. Department of Justice has decided that they will not challenge any state laws that are enacted which make changes in how marijuana use and possession is dealt with in terms of criminal penalties. Thinking about current marijuana laws in Michigan, which of the following statements best describes the approach to marijuana use that you favor the most?” **[READ AND ROTATE 1 TO 4 – ACCEPT FIRST AND ONLY ONE RESPONSE]**

The responses were:

47%	Legalize marijuana by taxing and regulating it like alcohol
26%	Continue our present system of state criminal penalties for marijuana offenses
16%	Replace criminal penalties for marijuana offenses with a fine
4%	Repeal all state criminal penalties for marijuana offenses
7%	Undecided/Refused

With only 26 percent favoring the idea of continuing the present system of state criminal penalties for marijuana offenses in the September 2013 survey, and 16 percent saying they support replacing criminal penalties for marijuana offenses with a fine, as well as another four percent favoring the repeal of all current state criminal penalties, supporters have the potential of significantly increasing voter support for legalization (above the 50 percent of Michigan voters who currently support legalization), by converting many of those voters who favored a fine or the outright repeal of all state criminal penalties for marijuana offenses in the 2013 survey.

It is worth noting that there has not been a great deal of public attention or discussion of about proposals to legalize the possession and use of small amounts of marijuana, and to the extent that supporters can generate more public discussions about the topic, support is likely to continue to increase, as it did from the 2013 survey to the current one.

In the December 2014 survey, Democrats, especially Democratic men, were the most supportive, followed by Independent voters, with Republicans opposed. Younger voters age 18-34 were most supportive, while voters age 65 and over were most opposed. Voters living in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties were most supportive, while voters living in the Bay area and Northern Michigan were most opposed, although those two areas have small sample sizes. Western Michigan and the outer metro area surrounding Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties were split on the question.

The following chart illustrates how voters view the issue based on partisan affiliation:

Partisan Breakdown					Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
	All	Dems	Ind	Gop	Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
Yes	50	62	53	37	70	55	56	51	35	39
No	46	34	43	61	28	38	42	44	63	59
Undecided	4	4	4	2	2	7	2	7	2	3

With a solid majority of Democrats and a narrow majority of Independent voters supportive of legalization, notwithstanding the opposition of Republican voters by the same margin as Democrats are supportive, the prospects for voter approval would be more favorable in a higher turnout election, especially if support continues to increase.

Demographic voter groups favoring marijuana legalization by percentages above the statewide overall results of 50 percent included:

No religious affiliation (73%); Democratic men (70%); age 18-34 (69%); voted in one of the last two general elections (66%); favorable opinion of Obama, moderates, liberals (63% each); positive job rating for Obama (62% each); men age 18-49, Wayne County (60% each); U.S. headed in right direction, opposed to the Tea Party, African Americans (59% each); union members (57%); Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties, age 18-49, Independent men (56% each); Democratic women (55%); Michigan headed off on wrong track, unfavorable opinion of Snyder, negative job rating for Snyder, post HS technical education, age 50-64 (54% each); households with children, women age 18-49, Macomb County, Oakland County (52% each); Central Michigan, other religions, and Independent women (51% each).

Demographic voter groups opposing marijuana legalization by percentages above the statewide overall results of 46 percent included:

Moderate Republican Tea Party supporters (69%); strong Republican Tea Party supporters (64%); conservatives, Republican men (63% each); Bay area region (60%); Republican women (59%); unfavorable opinion of Obama (58%); Tea Party supporters, age 65 and over (57% each); negative job rating for Obama (55%); Protestants (54%); northern Michigan, U.S. off on wrong track (53% each); positive job rating for Snyder, Michigan's economy getting worse (52% each); favorable opinion of Snyder, other races, women age 50 and over (51% each); unsure about Michigan direction, age 50 and over (50% each); Catholics, men age 50 and over, outstate voters (49% each); voted in both of last two general elections, Michigan headed in right direction, Michigan's economy about the same, unsure about Tea Party, all women (48% each); and Western Michigan, households without children, college educated, age 35-49 (47% each).

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